DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 191 400 HE 013 079

AUTHOR	Hyde, William
TITLE	The Age and Related Demographic Characteristics of Students Attending Community Colleges and Four-Year Institutions. Working Papers in Education Finance.
INSTITUTION	Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo. Education Finance Center.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	ECS-WP-32
PUB DATE	Sep 80
CONTRACT	400-79-0072
NOTE	84p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Education Finance Center, Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln St., Suite 300, Denver, CO 80295
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Age: Blacks: *College Students: Community Colleges: Comparative Analysis: Enrollment Trends: Females: Full Time Students: Higher Education: Minority Groups: National Surveys: *Nontraditional Students: Part Time Students: Private Colleges: Socioeconomic Status: State Colleges: *Student Characteristics: *Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

Information is presented on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of students attending community colleges and four-year institutions in the United States, based on data from the Current Population Survey. It was found that the community college student, on the average, is older than the average student attending a four-year institution. Community colleges have a larger proportion of students attending on a part-time basis. Additionally, community college students as compared to other students more often delay entering college after finishing high school. As compared to students of four-year institutions, community college students are slightly more often married and working. Racial minorities and women also constitute a larger proportion of community college enrollment than at four-year institutions. A larger percentage of community college students than students at other institutions are less advantaged socioeconomically. A comparison of student characteristics between 1973 and 1978 shows that, on the average, a student has gained during this period more independence, more social and economic responsibilities, and is more likely to attend college on a part-time basis. Greater participation by blacks and women has also occurred, and there has been an increase over time in the average age of the student. (SW)

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ED191400

WORKING PAPERS IN EDUCATION FINANCE

Working Paper No. 32

THE AGE AND RELATED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

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September 1980

This report was written under contract to the National Institute of Education, Contract No. 400-79-0072.

HE013079

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to Gretchen Perez who prepared the manuscript and tables and to Steven Russell who did the programming for the CPS tapes. Gratitude is also expressed to David McMillan at Bureau of the Census for assistance in providing the tapes.

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that the characteristics of students are becoming more diverse than they have been in the past. More students are nontraditional. It is also commonly held that most of the nontraditional students attend community colleges. While a number of individual institutions have documented the demographic characteristics of their students, there has been no comprehensive national level assessment of the demographic characteristics of students and comparison of student characteristics among institutional sectors, which is the purpose of this report.

The data are presented in 18 tables and may serve as a useful reference regarding the characteristics of students, differences that exist between community college students and students attending other institutional sectors (public and private four-year institutions),* and changes that have occurred between 1973 and 1978 in the attributes of students. Particular attention is given to the age of students attending community colleges and four-year institutions and to the association of the characteristics of adulthood with type of attendance.

The following text is limited to a discussion of key findings that are drawn from the tables. The data, while limited to students enrolled for credit, are from the Current Population Survey reports conducted by the Department of Commerce and include

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*The private two-year sector was omitted because of too few observations.

students of all ages. They provide national representation and give infomation on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of students attending community colleges as well as four-year institutions. More information about the sample is given in Appendix A.

STUDENT AGE

It is often stated that adults compose a growing proportion of the student population and that the average age of students, community college students in particular, is rising rapidly. Lack of comparability of data prevent strict comparisons over time, but substantiation of the claim of greater average age among community college students depends upon what students are included in the calculation.

If all students are included in the calculation, there is little difference between the average age of community college students and students attending other institutions. In fact, if one examines only full-time students or only part-time students, the mean and median age of community college students is less than that of students attending public or private four-year institutions.

Among full-time students, in 1978, the mean age of community college students was 21.5, and the mean age was 21.7 for students at four-year institutions. The median age for community college students was 19.3, while it was 20.5 and 20.3 for students at public and private four-year institutions, respectively (see Table 1).

Among part-time community college students the mean age was 30.4 and slightly higher for part-time students at public and private four-year institutions. The median age for part-time community college students was 27.5 and, likewise, was greater for students at four-year institutions. Only when all students are considered, combining part-time and full-time students, does the average age of the community college student exceed that of the average age of students attending four-year institutions, due to the larger portion of part-time students among community college students than among the other two sectors. (More than half of the community college students attend part time while only a little more than one-fourth of the students in four-year institutions attend part time.)

However, it can be argued that estimation of average student age based on all students is not appropriate because community colleges offer only lower division programs, while four-year institutions offer upper division programs and many of them have graduate programs. If the analysis is limited to lower division students, the results are different. The mean age of the community college student (25.4) is almost five years greater than for students at four-year institutions (see Table 2).

The difference between lower division students in the two types of institutions is attributed not only to the large proportion of part-time students among community college students but also to the greater delay among community college students in college matriculation after finishing high school. This is particularly obvious when a comparison is made between full-time,

lower division students at community colleges and four-year institutions. The mean age of full-time, lower division community college students was 21.1 and about one and a half to two years less for full-time, lower division students at four-year institutions. The fact that these students are full-time and that they attend a lower division program supports the notion that community colleges have particular appeal for students who delay their matriculation following high school graduation.

The age difference among lower division students disappears, however, for part-time students. The part-time, lower division student average age was about 29, although a much larger portion of community college students attended part time than in four-year institutions.

CHANGES IN AGE OF STUDENTS BETWEEN 1973 AND 1978

The proportion of students of conventional collegiate age, 18 and 19 for community college students and 18 to 22 for students at four-year institutions, declined between 1973 and 1978, and the proportion of students 26 years of age and older increased (see Table 3). In 1973, half of the students at four-year institutions and 44 percent of community college students were less than 20 years old. (The 1973 figures should be adjusted downward slightly for the omission in 1973 of students over 35 years of age, but the percentage of these students was only 11 percent in 1978 and probably less in 1973.) In 1978, less than 3 out of 10 community college students were less than 20 years old. Among four-year

institutions the fraction was slightly less. Somewhat surprising is that the decline in the proportion of students under 20 years of age was greater for four-year institutions than for community colleges. A possible explanation is that students sought higher levels of education and more advanced degrees in 1978 than in 1973, increasing the enrollments of older students at four-year institutions.

Although the percentage of students 26 to 35 years old is greater in community colleges (22.4 percent in 1978) than in the four-year institutions (less than 20 percent on average), the rate of growth between 1973 and 1978 was greater in the four-year institutions. Four-year institutions more than doubled the proportion of students between 26 and 35, while community colleges increased the percentage by only one percentage point.

The growth in the number of students 36 years old and older is not known because they were not recorded in 1973, but their numbers do not form a large percentage of the students in 1978. The 60 and over group consists of only 1.1 percent of the community college students and about one-fourth of that for four-year institutions. Presumably, the percentage has increased since 1978 and would be even greater if noncredit enrollments were included.

Accompanying the change in the age distribution of students was a change in program enrollments. In 1978, virtually all students (98 percent for community colleges) in the 14 to 19 age group were enrolled in lower division courses, but the percentage decreases with each successive age group (see Table 4). For

example, in the 20 to 25 age group, only 76 percent were in lower division programs and 72 percent for the 26 to 35 age group, indicating substantial enrollment in programs other than lower division programs. In 1973 the comparable percentage was practically the same for the 14 to 19 year old students, but program diversity was less for the older students; 85 percent of the older community college students were enrolled in lower division courses. The figures for the four-year institutions also show that there was a greater concentration of enrollments in lower division programs in 1973 than in 1978.

NONTRADITIONAL ENROLLMENT PATTERNS

The conventional collegiate youth can be viewed as the high school senior who enrolls in a college on a full-time basis immediately following high school graduation and takes the minimum amount of time to complete a program of study, for example, four years for a bachelor's degree. However, many students interested in conventional curricula are interested in nontraditional enrollment, in attending part time often to integrate employment and schooling or in delaying entering postsecondary education.

Data presented here show that community colleges more than other institutions attract students who participate through these nontraditional enrollment methods. The table below shows that over half of the community college students enrolled in lower division programs attended on a part-time basis, about three times as often as students attending four-year institutions. While the

percentage of students attending part time in 1973 was less than in 1978, community colleges still dominated the part-time student enrollments.

Percentage of Lower Division Students Attending Part-Time

	1973	1978
Public Two-Year	38.3 percent	51.8 percent
Public Four-Year	11.7	16.3
Private Four-Year	7.9	14.8

It is also apparent that more students attending community colleges than other institutions delayed matriculation. In 1978, only three out of five full-time, lower division community college students were of conventional collegiate age, but four out of five full-time, lower division students at four-year institutions were less than 20 years old (see Table 5). In 1973, a larger percentage of full-time, lower division students were of conventional age, but the community colleges still had a larger percentage of students of nonconventional age than the four-year institutions (see Table 6). Similar results, between community colleges and four-year institutions and between 1973 and 1978, were found for part-time students.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ADULT CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

The distinction made between adults and youths in examining enrollment patterns in higher education is often based on age,

although age is an imperfect proxy for other attributes that more directly influence attendance. Age is correlated with many life cycle events, such as marriage and the subsequent opportunity to become divorced or widowed, which affect individuals' decisions to attend college and the type of institution to attend. Other attributes of adulthood include working and being the head of a household or the spouse of the head of a household. Data on the frequency of these attributes as well as information on other demographic characteristics or measures of social and economic responsibilities among community college students and students at four-year institutions show that on average the community college student is more "adult" and less socioeconomically advantaged, even among students of the same age (see Tables 7, 8 and 9).

A third of community college students are heads of households, but only 27 percent of students at four-year institutions are heads of households. Among conventional collegiate youths (less than 20 years old), 4.5 percent of community college students are heads of households while only 3.3 percent and 1.5 percent of conventional collegiate youths are heads of households in four-year public and private institutions, respectively. Marriage, involving certain social and economic commitments, is also more frequent among community college students as is divorce.

Racial minorities and women also constitute a larger proportion of community college enrollment than at four-year institutions. Twelve percent of community college students are

black, but only 10 percent are in public four-year institutions and 8 percent in private four-year institutions. Women in community colleges make up nearly 53 percent of enrollment but less than 49 percent in four-year institutions.

From an economic perspective, a larger percentage of community college students than students at other institutions are less advantaged. Over two-thirds of community college students are employed while only slightly over one-half of students at four-year institutions work. Among conventional collegiate youths, the discrepancy is greater. Over 60 percent of community college conventional aged students work but only about a third of the students attending four-year institutions work. The percentage of students with an income or with parental income below $15,000 is 45 percent for community college students and 38 and 31 percent, respectively, for four-year public and private institutions.

Part-time students are twice as common in community colleges as in other institutions and four times more common among conventional collegiate youths, with 21 percent of community college conventional collegiate aged youths attending on a part-time basis. Within each institutional sector, the percentage of part-time students increases with each successive age group to the point where nearly all students in the 60 and over age group attend part time. A similar trend appears in the percentage of part-time students taking a light course load (one to five credit hours). As expected, the median tuition paid by a student declines as the part-time percentage of students increases,

reflecting the lesser tuition and fee charge levied upon part-time students.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME STUDENTS

Greater comparability of characteristics of students attending community colleges and four-year institutions is achieved by examining the frequencies of the demographic and socioeconomic attributes only for students attending lower division programs. The data show the same relative relationships of the frequency of characteristics among students in community colleges and four-year institutions, although the actual frequencies are different. Lower division community college students have, on average, more adult characteristics and are less economically advantaged than lower division students attending four-year institutions (see Tables 10 through 15).

When lower division students are divided into part-time and full-time attendance, a larger difference appears in the frequencies of adult attributes. Part-time students, on average, have more adult qualities than full-time students. For example, 41 percent of part time, lower division community college students are heads of households while only 18 percent are heads of households among full-time, lower division community college students. For students at four-year institutions the difference is greater; over 30 percent of part-time, lower division students are heads of households, and 7 percent are heads of households among full-time lower division students.

Much of the difference in the adultness of part-time and full-time students is due to the greater average age of part-time students. About 60 percent of full-time, but only 15 percent of part-time, lower division community college students are of conventional college age. However, a comparison of the part-time and full-time lower division conventional collegiate aged students still reveals more adult attributes among the part-time students. For example, 6 percent of part-time conventional aged community college students are married but only 1 percent of full-time students. Furthermore, 90 percent of part-time conventional aged community college students are working while only 52 percent of full-time students are. Similar differences between part-time and full-time conventional aged college students taking lower division programs are found among four-year institutions.

CHANGES IN STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN 1973 AND 1978

A comparison of student characteristics between 1973 and 1978 shows that, on average, a student has gained during this five year period more independence, more social and economic responsibilities, and is more likely to attend on a part-time basis. Greater participation by blacks and women has also occurred (see Tables 16, 17 and 18 and compare with Tables 7, 8 and 9). As already discussed, there has been an increase over time in the average age of the student (see Table 3), which explains some of the changes in student attributes, but similar differences over time are generally found within each age group.

Although adult attributes are found among community college students more frequently than among students attending four-year institutions (even within an age category), the rate of change over time has been greater among four-year institutions. For example, from 1973 to 1978 the percentage of community college students who were married increased by about 20 percent (from 30 to 36 percent), but the percentage of students attending four-year institutions who were married, roughly doubled (to about one-fourth of the students in 1978).

Changes in participation rates for blacks and women, however, were greater in community colleges than in four-year institutions. In 1973, 44 percent of community college students were women and in 1978 the percentage was 53. Among four-year institutions, there has been less of a change. In 1973, 46 percent of students at public four-year institutions and 43 percent of students at private four-year institutions were women. In 1978, the percentage had increased to 49 and 48 percent, respectively.

The pattern of change in participation rates of blacks is similar to those for women. Blacks in community colleges increased from 9 to 12 percent of the enrollment. At public four-year institutions, the increase was from about 9 percent to 10 percent, and at private four-year institutions there was no change from an 8 percent black enrollment level.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Information on characteristics of students attending different institutional sectors in the past has been limited. Some surveys conducted by individual institutions give fairly detailed accounts of the characteristics of their students but are not nationally representative, and national level surveys of student characteristics make no distinction among students attending different types of higher education institutions, or, when they do, the level of detail is limited to basic demographic characteristics such as race and sex. The data reported here, drawn from the Current Population Survey reports that provide national representation, give information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of students attending community colleges as well as four-year institutions.

To a large extent the results document popularly held notions about community college students. The community college student, on average, is older than the average student attending a four-year institution for two reasons. First, community colleges have a larger proportion of their students attending on a part-time basis; consequently, the elapsed time to complete a program, other things equal, is longer than for a student who attends full-time, and therefore the average age is greater. Second, community college students, on average, more than other students delay entering college after finishing high school.

The older age of community college students is naturally accompanied by the more frequent presence of other adult

attributes including forming family relationships, such as marrying and serving as the head of a household, and working, but even among the conventional collegiate aged students, adult attributes are found more frequently among community college students (either part time or full time) than among students attending four-year institutions. The implication is a major one. There is a tendency for students who have accepted social and economic responsibilities of adulthood, regardless of age, to enroll in community colleges. The same preference is found among economically less advantaged students and minorities (blacks) and women. Numerous reasons for this preference have been offered including convenience of location or class scheduling, low cost, or availability of particular programs.

Undoubtedly, a host of reasons are partially responsible. Whatever the reasons, community colleges are particularly attractive to nontraditional students, but the relative dominance of these students by community colleges may diminish. There is an upper limit to the number of adults interested in attending college, and while community colleges have attracted the majority of them in the past, the trend between 1973 and 1978 suggests that the greatest rate of growth in the number of adult students may occur among four-year institutions rather than among community colleges. A key factor in the outcome will be the effort institutions make to work together to plan their curricular offerings to avoid a situation in which each institution tries to serve all types of students in an effort to maintain or increase enrollment levels.

TABLES

Table 1

AGE OF STUDENTS BY PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME STATUS BY INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR, FALL 1978

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	(n= 806)	(n=1,065)	(n=1,901)
Mean	21.5	30.4	26.5
Median	19.3	27.5	22.6
Percentage less than 20	54	11	30
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	(n=2,590)	(n=1,069)	(n=3,689)
Mean	21.7	30.9	24.3
Median	20.5	28.5	21.5
Percentage less than 20	35	5	27
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	(n=1,140)	(n= 426)	(n=1,579)
Mean	21.7	31.7	24.5
Median	20.3	29.8	21.4
Percentage less than 20	36	4	27

Table 2

AGE OF LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME STATUS BY INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR, FALL 1978

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	(n= 725)	(n= 791)	(n=1,516)
Mean	21.1	29.3	25.4
Median	19.1	26.4	21.6
Percentage less than 20	60	15	36
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	(n=1,124)	(n= 232)	(n=1,356)
Mean	19.4	28.4	20.8
Median	18.6	26.0	18.9
Percentage less than 20	79	20	69
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	(n= 488)	(n= 82)	(n= 570)
Mean	19.1	30.4	20.8
Median	18.6	26.4	18.8
Percentage less than 20	81	23	73

Table 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AND INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR, FALL 1973 AND 1978

	Age (1978)					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60 or more	Total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	29.6	31.6	22.4	15.3	1.1	100.0
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	26.6	44.7	20.4	8.0	0.3	100.0
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	27.5	43.6	18.9	9.9	0.2	100.1*

	Age (1973)					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60 or more	Total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	44.0	34.7	21.4	-	-	100.1*
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	49.5	41.4	9.1	-	-	100.0
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	49.9	41.5	8.6	-	-	100.0

*Not equal to 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 4

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED
IN LOWER DIVISION BY AGE GROUP AND
INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR, FALL 1973 AND 1978

	Age (1978)					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60 or more	total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	98.2	76.1	72.2	68.4	-	80.2
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	91.9	15.0	14.0	15.4	-	35.4
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	91.8	13.5	9.7	13.2	-	34.7

	Age (1973)					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60 or more	total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	97.6	86.0	84.7	-	-	90.8
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	91.3	27.9	40.0	-	-	60.4
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	89.6	18.7	34.5	-	-	55.5

Table 5

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AND INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR AND FULL- AND PART-TIME STATUS, FALL 1978

	Age					
Full-Time	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60 or more	Total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	59.6	28.0	8.9	3.3	0.1	99.9*
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	78.8	17.3	3.3	0.6	0.0	100.0
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	81.1	15.9	2.7	0.4	0.0	100.1*
Part-Time						
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	14.6	31.7	30.5	22.1	1.1	100.0
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	20.0	27.6	32.8	18.2	1.4	100.0
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	23.2	23.4	20.4	33.0	0.0	100.0

*Not equal to 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 6

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AND INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR AND FULL- AND PART-TIME STATUS, FALL 1973

	Age			
Full-Time	14-19	20-25	26-34	Total
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	65.2	26.4	8.5	100.1*
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	81.8	16.0	2.2	100.0
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	85.7	11.9	2.4	100.0
Part-Time				
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	18.4	43.2	38.4	100.0
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	22.2	42.7	10.1	100.0
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	22.9	37.3	39.8	100.0

*Not equal to 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 7

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60-96	Total
Head of household	4.5	32.3	58.9	54.2	57.2	33.6
Wife of household head	1.5	13.8	31.6	43.6	37.9	18.9
Other relative of head of household	88.8	44.2	7.9	1.3	4.8	42.3
Married	2.1	25.7	70.1	71.3	70.8	36.1
Widowed or divorced	0.3	4.3	8.3	19.0	24.4	6.5
Black	10.7	10.8	15.3	13.1	0.0	12.0
Other minority	3.3	3.9	2.0	1.8	3.1	2.9
Female	51.6	48.8	48.0	65.0	62.0	52.9
Working	60.7	69.3	76.1	76.3	52.5	68.2
Income below $15,000	38.3	54.6	47.6	31.8	46.9	44.6
Part-time attendance	20.8	56.2	80.0	88.9	84.8	56.5
Taking 1-5 credit hours (among part-time students)	41.7	52.1	46.9	61.1	66.4	48.4
Tuition, median ($)	304	150	90	60	16	148

Table 8

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60-96	Total
Head of household	3.3	22.3	60.6	49.0	64.9	27.3
Wife of household head	4.3	7.6	23.9	44.3	22.9	12.1
Other relative of head of household	97.6	63.1	10.7	3.8	12.2	55.6
Married	1.4	15.7	58.2	74.3	42.6	25.3
Widowed or divorced	1.6	1.6	10.4	17.0	30.2	4.3
Black	11.1	10.2	9.8	7.3	16.3	10.1
Other minority	2.4	3.6	3.0	1.3	5.0	3.0
Female	51.3	45.3	46.2	66.1	80.3	48.8
Working	34.5	50.3	78.3	75.7	39.1	53.1
Income below $15,000	26.9	43.2	44.2	26.6	47.2	37.8
Part-time attendance	5.0	17.5	60.7	82.7	87.8	28.4
Taking 1-5 credit hours (among part-time students)	32.3	48.6	59.6	60.7	73.2	51.8
Tuition, median ($)	800	732	400	240	32	650

Table 9

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age					
	14-19	20-25	26-35	36-59	60-96	Total
Head of household	1.5	23.9	57.1	57.1	93.1	27.4
Wife of household head	0.2	4.6	23.9	38.1	6.9	10.3
Other relative of head of household	97.2	64.2	14.8	3.5	0.0	57.8
Married	0.4	12.7	57.2	73.0	36.6	23.7
Widowed or divorced	0.0	2.1	8.7	16.1	45.9	4.2
Black	4.4	8.4	10.0	11.3	45.9	8.0
Other minority	2.2	3.4	2.1	2.2	0.0	2.7
Female	49.3	46.1	45.3	59.3	70.2	48.2
Working	31.9	49.1	71.1	81.3	0.0	52.0
Income below $15,000	20.3	40.2	34.6	14.6	45.9	31.1
Part-time attendance	4.4	16.1	60.2	81.7	100.0	27.9
Taking 1-5 credit hours (among part-time students)	37.6	47.6	56.9	62.3	29.8	51.0
Tuition, median ($)	3,300	2,650	1,080	600	138	2,500

Table 10

CHARACTERISTICS OF FULL-TIME LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS
BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age 14-19 (n=433)	20-25 (n=204)	26-25 (n=65)	36-59 (n=22)	60 or more (n=1)	Total (n=725)
Head of household	4.3	29.2	66.1	-	-	18.2
Wife of household head	0.8	7.0	20.1	-	-	6.1
Other relative of head of household	90.5	55.0	10.1	-	-	70.3
Married	1.0	16.4	62.4	-	-	13.2
Widowed or divorced	0.4	4.9	17.8	-	-	3.9
Black	12.6	15.9	18.4	-	-	14.4
Other minority	3.6	5.4	4.7	-	-	4.1
Female	54.7	42.4	36.3	-	-	50.2
Working	52.3	45.4	47.6	-	-	50.3
Income below $15,000	39.3	53.9	69.7	-	-	46.3
Tuition, median ($)	370	325	239	-	-	340

Table 11

CHARACTERISTICS OF FULL-TIME LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristics	Age 14-19 (n=884)	20-25 (n=196)	26-25 (n=37)	36-59 (n=7)	60 or more (n=0)	Total (n=1,124)
Head of household	2.3	17.2	56.9	-	-	6.8
Wife of household head	0.7	5.4	15.1	-	-	2.2
Other relative of head of household	95.4	69.7	21.5	-	-	88.1
Married	0.9	8.8	42.8	-	-	3.9
Widowed or divorced	0.1	0.9	12.9	-	-	0.8
Black	11.1	18.9	15.3	-	-	12.5
Other minority	2.2	3.3	2.7	-	-	2.4
Female	52.0	40.0	46.9	-	-	49.9
Working	29.7	32.9	31.3	-	-	30.5
Income below $15,000	26.0	53.3	70.3	-	-	32.2
Tuition, median ($)	800	750	696	-	-	800

Table 12

CHARACTERISTICS OF FULL-TIME LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age 14-19 (n=393)	20-25 (n=77)	26-35 (n=15)	36-59 (n=3)	60 or more (n=0)	Total (n=488)
Head of household	1.0	27.3	50.2	-	-	6.8
Wife of household head	0.0	2.9	21.9	-	-	1.1
Other relative of head of household	97.8	64.1	27.9	-	-	90.2
Married	0.3	8.9	54.1	-	-	3.3
Widowed or divorced	0.0	7.9	5.8	-	-	1.4
Black	4.6	18.5	13.4	-	-	7.0
Other minority	2.3	8.0	4.5	-	-	3.4
Female	49.7	43.0	63.5	-	-	49.0
Working	28.6	37.0	42.0	-	-	30.2
Income below $15,000	20.8	53.0	59.7	-	-	27.2
Tuition, median ($)	3,300	2,298	1,607	-	-	3,100

Table 13

CHARACTERISTICS OF PART-TIME LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age 14-19 (n=115)	20-25 (n=253)	26-35 (n=240)	36-59 (n=174)	60 or more (n=9)	Total (n=791)
Head of household	5.7	32.7	57.5	51.6	-	41.0
Wife of household head	3.8	19.1	36.6	46.4	-	28.1
Other relative of head of household	82.6	36.2	4.7	1.4	-	25.4
Married	6.0	34.0	74.1	73.6	-	51.2
Widowed or divorced	0.0	4.8	7.6	17.0	-	8.0
Black	4.7	7.3	14.9	11.4	-	10.1
Other minority	2.0	3.3	1.6	2.0	-	2.4
Female	57.6	54.3	50.3	67.7	-	56.3
Working	89.6	87.3	83.1	76.7	-	83.8
Income below $15,000	36.0	54.2	44.4	34.6	-	44.5
Taking 1-5 credit hours	41.9	48.8	45.0	61.0	-	49.6
Tuition, median ($)	120	90	80	56	-	80

Table 14

CHARACTERISTICS OF PART-TIME LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age 14-19 (n=47)	20-25 (n=65)	26-25 (n=74)	36-59 (n=41)	60 or more (n=5)	Total (n=232)
Head of household	15.5	23.8	52.3	39.6	-	34.9
Wife of household head	1.1	18.2	40.3	60.4	-	30.0
Other relative of head of household	77.0	49.8	3.9	0.0	-	30.4
Married	7.6	33.7	59.6	72.4	-	44.5
Widowed or divorced	0.0	7.8	10.0	26.0	-	10.7
Black	9.8	7.6	16.3	8.1	-	11.4
Other minority	0.2	5.0	1.7	0.0	-	2.2
Female	38.6	46.6	65.6	88.5	-	59.3
Working	73.4	86.5	85.4	57.7	-	78.3
Income below $15,000	38.2	37.0	41.7	42.9	-	40.2
Taking 1-5 credit hours	33.3	55.6	52.2	59.1	-	51.0
Tuition, median ($)	452	260	220	123	-	220

Table 15

CHARACTERISTICS OF PART-TIME LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1978
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age 14-19 (n=18)	20-25 (n=18)	26-35 (n=18)	36-59 (n=28)	60 or more (n=5)	Total (n=82)
Head of household	3.4	34.6	50.8	38.3	-	31.9
Wife of household head	3.7	16.9	33.2	57.8	-	30.6
Other relative of head of household	92.9	48.5	16.0	3.8	-	37.5
Married	3.7	40.5	54.0	88.2	-	50.4
Widowed or divorced	0.0	0.0	6.3	11.8	-	5.2
Black	0.0	11.0	10.3	22.3	-	12.0
Other minority	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	-	2.2
Female	54.1	54.6	64.7	63.9	-	59.6
Working	61.7	79.4	98.3	78.7	-	78.9
Income below $15,000	7.1	38.2	41.2	5.2	-	20.7
Taking 1-5 credit hours	37.6	45.2	45.7	75.3	-	53.6
Tuition, median ($)	742	1,009	387	241	-	560

Table 16

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1973
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age			
	14-19	20-25	26-34	Total
Head of household	3.5	31.9	59.5	25.3
Wife of household head	1.9	15.7	32.0	13.1
Other relative of head of household	90.3	48.0	5.0	57.4
Married	3.5	35.1	76.7	30.1
Widowed or divorced	1.0	2.4	7.8	2.9
Black	8.3	9.8	9.0	9.0
Female	49.1	37.5	43.8	43.9
Income below $15,000	58.1	68.5	74.9	65.3
Attending 1st or 2nd year of college	97.5	86.1	84.7	90.8
Part-time attendance	15.2	50.1	75.0	40.1

Table 17

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1973
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age			
	14-19	20-25	26-34	Total
Head of household	1.9	18.5	65.9	14.6
Wife of head of household	0.9	7.5	20.6	5.5
Other relative of head of household	95.7	69.2	9.3	76.9
Married	2.1	17.0	71.5	14.6
Widowed or divorced	0.2	1.6	9.6	1.6
Black	9.5	8.3	8.9	8.9
Female	50.2	43.2	30.9	45.5
Income below $15,000	48.0	60.3	69.1	55.0
Attending 1st or 2nd year of college	91.3	28.0	40.0	60.4
Part-time attendance	3.3	15.2	55.1	13.0

Table 18

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP AT PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, FALL 1973
(in percent)

Student Characteristic	Age			
	14-19	20-25	26-34	Total
Head of household	2.2	18.0	68.9	14.5
Wife of household head	0.5	4.1	11.2	2.9
Other relative of head of household	95.3	73.5	14.7	79.4
Married	0.7	13.1	63.0	11.2
Widowed or divorced	0.0	1.1	8.8	1.2
Black	4.8	9.6	19.9	8.1
Female	49.0	37.8	28.1	42.5
Income below $15,000	37.2	50.5	77.4	46.1
Attending 1st or 2nd year of college	89.7	18.7	34.5	55.4
Part-time attendance	2.0	10.9	58.3	10.6

Appendix A

The Current Population Survey (CPS) of the Department of Commerce is an annual survey of 70,000 households undertaken primarily to obtain information on employment and unemployment in the labor force. In October of each year the basic annual survey is supplemented with information on schooling. A record is established for each person in each household so that about 160,000 observations are generated from the survey. The households are sampled and weighted to represent the U.S. population.

For purposes of this report, the records of individuals who indicated that they were attending college were selected. Too few observations were available to provide breakdowns of the characteristics of students attending private two-year institutions and they were excluded. The weighted sample for students attending community colleges (public two-year institutions) and public and private four-year institutions is given in Table A-1 and compared with the enrollment count given by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The estimate of total number of enrollments derived from the CPS is greater than the NCES count, and the CPS community college enrollment estimate is less than the NCES count, but the public four-year enrollment estimate is higher. To avoid drawing erroneous conclusions from the data because of these estimates, analysis is limited to comparisons within institutional sectors or comparisons among sectors regarding proportional distributions within sectors.

Table A1

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY
INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR,
FALL 1978

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
CPS			
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	1,289,022	1,673,724	2,962,746
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	3,784,894	1,504,216	5,289,110
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	1,732,545	671,859	2,404,404
NCES			
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR	1,439,213	2,434,477	3,873,690
PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR	1,816,116	989,792	2,849,908
PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR	1,163,221	438,093	1,601,314

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